

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 OIC-02 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-07
EUR-12 NEA-10 FEA-01 ACDA-07 AGRE-00 AID-05
CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 EPG-02 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FMC-01
TRSE-00 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00
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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4514

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 2277

FROM LOS DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS
SUBJ: LOS SITREP JULY 15, 1977

1. SIXTH SESSION OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON LAW OF THE SEA
ADJOURNED JULY 15 WITH DELEGATES STILL AWAITING COMPLETION
OF THE NEW COMPOSITE TEXT, WHICH HAD BEEN THE OBJECTIVE OF
THE PAST EIGHT WEEKS OF NEGOTIATION. PRESIDENT AMERASINGHE
HAD CONSIDERED EXTENDING THE CONFERENCE TO JULY 18 BUT
ABANDONED THE IDEA WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE COMPOSITE
TEXT WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL JULY 21
AT THE EARLIEST. THERE HAD BEEN WIDE RESISTANCE AMONG
DELEGATIONS TO THE IDEA OF A THREE-DAY EXTENSION, AND THE
THOUGHT OF A NINTH WEEK GAINED NO SUPPORT AT ALL.

2. IN ITS LAST ORDER OF BUSINESS, THE CONFERENCE DECIDED
TO CONVENE THE SEVENTH SESSION IN GENEVA ON MARCH 28, 1978.
THE PLENARY AGREED ON A SEVEN WEEKS' SESSION WITH A POSSIBLE
ONE WEEK EXTENSION, BUT IT DID NOT GET AROUND TO DISCUSSING
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PROCEDURES. MOST OF THE FINAL DAY IN PLENARY WAS
ABSORBED IN SOMETIMES ACERBIC DISCUSSION OF THE VENUE
FOR THE NEXT SESSION. AMERASINGHE SUGGESTED THAT NEW
YORK SHOULD BE RULED OUT, SINCE SCHEDULED REMODELING OF
FACILITIES WOULD SEVERELY LIMIT THE MEETING ROOMS AVAILABLE.
HE SUGGESTED THAT GENEVA WOULD BE A LOGICAL ALTERNATIVE
SITE. HOWEVER, JAMAICA AND MALTA ALSO ASKED TO BE

CONSIDERED, THE FORMER ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WAS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY WITH A WARM CLIMATE THAT WOULD BE CONDUCIVE TO PRODUCTIVE DISCUSSION, AND THE LATTER ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WAS A NEUTRAL SITE. MAJORITY OF LATINS AND SOME AFRICANS SUPPORTED JAMAICA, WHILE THE EASTERN EUROPEANS, ASIANS AND ARABS ACTIVELY PROMOTED GENEVA. COMMITTEE I CHAIRMAN ENGO CRITICIZED AMERASINGHE FOR RULING OUT NEW YORK AND PROMOTING GENEVA. THE UNUSUALLY SHARP EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO ON THIS MINOR ISSUE SEEMED TO UNDERSCORE THE DIFFICULTIES THEY ARE HAVING IN THE PREPARATION OF PART I OF THE COMPOSITE TEXT. TO PUT AN END TO THE DEBATE, AMERASINGHE FINALLY CALLED FOR A SECRET BALLOT, AND GENEVA WON WITH 81 VOTES TO 47 FOR JAMAICA AND 3 FOR MALTA.

3. SINCE THE COMPOSITE TEXT IS STILL THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND AMERASINGHE, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CHARACTERIZE THIS SESSION AT THE PRESENT TIME. THE TEXT OF PART I REMAINS MOST UNCERTAIN OF ALL, BUT THERE COULD ALSO BE UNEXPECTED LAST-MINUTE CHANGES IN PARTS II, III, AND IV. IF NO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES ARE MADE IN LANGUAGE THAT EMERGED FROM BROADLY REPRESENTATIVE NEGOTIATING GROUPS, THE RESULT COULD BE A TEXT EMBODYING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES ARE INTRODUCED--AND HERE, THE GREATEST RISK ATTACHES TO PART I--THE RESULT COULD BE NO PROGRESS OR EVEN RETROGRESSION. AMBASSADOR RICHARDSON HAS ACCORDINGLY MADE IT KNOWN TO CONFIDENTIAL

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AMERASINGHE THAT THE UNITED STATES ATTACHES CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE OBSERVANCE OF DUE PROCESS IN MAKING CHANGES IN NEGOTIATED COMPROMISES. TO REINFORCE THIS CONCERN, HE INTENDS TO REMAIN IN NEW YORK AS LONG AS THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHAIRMAN CONTINUE TO MEET. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE DELEGATION IS OBLIGED TO DELAY ITS EVALUATION OF THE SIXTH SESSION AND COMPLETION OF THE DELEGATION REPORTS UNTIL AFTER RECEIVING THE COMPOSITE TEXT.

LEONARD

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